

Substitute Resolution No. 905-13

Resolution directing the relocation of the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission and the preservation or return of plaques and other memorial displays from Franklin County Veterans Memorial at 300 West Broad Street to Memorial Hall at 280 East Broad Street

(COMMISSIONERS)

WHEREAS, Franklin County Veterans Memorial at 300 West Broad Street requires extensive and costly renovations to remain a memorial, auditorium and exhibition hall; and

WHEREAS, historic plaques and other memorial displays adorned Memorial Hall at 280 East Broad Street until 1999 when they were moved to the Veterans Memorial on West Broad Street; and

WHEREAS, Memorial Hall on East Broad Street was designed primarily as a memorial and meeting place for war veterans and has served the community as a venue for theatrical, musical and other productions as well as hosting debates, political rallies, graduation ceremonies and many other events;¹ and

WHEREAS, the “formal dedication of the great . . . (280 East Broad Street) Memorial Hall took place on Thursday, January 4, 1906 following a parade of soldiers, sailors and other organizations in whose honor it was built”², and

WHEREAS, “Constructed of light brick and stone trim, Greek in architectural tendency” “the sturdy bulk gave it (Memorial Hall at 280 East Broad Street) unquestioned prominence” . . . and . . . “the strong, classic lines indicated the strength and vigor that continue since the rejuvenation of the building in the 1960’s when it became the Center of Science and Industry”;³ and

WHEREAS, in 1917 the Memorial Hall at 280 East Broad Street was the headquarters of the World War I Draft Board and the host to a mass meeting to open Franklin County’s participation in the nationwide Thrift Drive; and, in 1918 hosted a welcoming party for soldiers as well as a mass meeting to “kick off” the third Liberty Loan Campaign; and, “Sousa’s band of 100 pieces played a concert of martial and patriotic music to

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inspire citizens to purchase more and more war bonds"; and, former President of the United States "Teddy" Roosevelt gave a rousing speech honoring particularly those who has lost their lives in service to their country"⁴; and

WHEREAS, "In 1919, on May 27, principles of the Peace League were endorsed by ex-President William Howard Taft in a rousing speech in Memorial Hall (280 East Broad Street) ..." and ..." later, on September 3, 1919 President Woodrow Wilson chose Memorial Hall as the place to open his nationwide League of Nations campaign"⁵; and

WHEREAS, "Memorial Hall (280 East Broad Street) played an important part in charitable and philanthropic events including, in 1919, when Children's Hospital Twigs began their Christmas fundraiser that continues to this day at other locations; and, later, Charity Newsies and the Franklin County Chapter of the American Red Cross distributed clothing to local residents from this site and 281 groups of volunteer women cut and sewed 80,297 garments during their 139,500 hours of service during the Great Depression;⁶ and

WHEREAS, during "World War II Memorial Hall (280 East Broad Street) became a ration center for tires and gasoline"⁷; and

WHEREAS, Memorial Hall (280 East Broad Street) has served as the test site for civil service exams and bar exams⁸; and

WHEREAS, although was not designed to be a sports arena, Memorial Hall hosted Jack Dempsey and his athletic carnival in 1919 and later boxing and wrestling matches⁹ and

WHEREAS, the Memorial Hall stage welcomed many nationally and internationally acclaimed performers including, Marian Anderson, the first African American singer to be a permanent member of the Metropolitan Opera; Italian Tenor Enrico Caruso; Spanish cellist Pablo Casals; New York

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Symphony Conductor Walter Johannes Damrosch; the Fisk University Singers; distinguished African American tenor Roland Hayes; American singer and actress Jeannette MacDonald; Philadelphia Orchestra Director Eugene Ormandy; Russian composer and conductor Sergey Vassilievitch Rachmaninoff; Spanish guitar virtuoso Andre Segovia; the Sistine Chapel Choir; American bandleader and composer John Philip Sousa; the Vienna Boys Choir¹⁰; and,

WHEREAS, Veterans Memorial at 300 West Broad Street can no longer adequately provide office space for the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission to provide services to our veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, Veterans Memorial (300 West Broad Street) can no longer serve as a site to display plaques and other historic monuments honoring Franklin County citizens who served in our nation's armed services; and,

WHEREAS, in his January 15, 2014 letter to the President of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners the President of the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission wrote that pursuant to a vote taken that day, "the Franklin County Veterans Service Commission has made a determination to accept the County's offer to relocate them to the old Memorial Hall" (280 East Broad Street); now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO:

- 1) The Franklin County Board of Commissioners determines the history of Memorial Hall on East Broad Street distinguishes it as the best site for providing services to Franklin County veterans through the Veterans Services Commission; and

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- 2) The Board of Commissioners further determines that the building's original distinguished architectural design is appropriate to the mission of a memorial building; and
- 3) The Board of Commissioners determines that to continue to recognize and honor the service and sacrifice of Franklin County veterans, office space shall be provided for the Veterans Service Commission within, and historic plaques and other memorial displays shall be preserved or returned to, Memorial Hall at 280 East Broad Street during or after July 2014.

WJF:skm

¹ "Memorial Hall biography of a building." Evelyn M. Graham & Myron T. Seifert. ©1973 by the Franklin County Historical Society and the Center of Science and Industry. Page 1

² Ibid. pg. 6

³ Ibid. pg. 10

⁴ Ibid. pg. 22 through 25

⁵ Ibid. pg. 27

⁶ Ibid. pg. 28 and 29

⁷ Ibid. pg. 29

⁸ Ibid. pg. 29

⁹ Ibid. pg. 15

¹⁰ Ibid. pg. 35-41

¹¹ Michael L. Close, President, Franklin County Veterans Service Commission letter to Franklin County Commissioner Marilyn Brown, January 15, 2014.